

Scott Pelath



Gas prices are a cause for concern for just about everyone who drives a car. As Vice-Chair of the Indiana House Roads and Transportation Committee, I have worked to keep the Indiana gas tax the 6th lowest in the nation and the lowest among neighboring Midwest states.

Fuel Taxes including surcharges

	IN	IL	KY	MI	OH	US Average
Gas cents/gal	15	19	16.4	19	22	19.9

Tips for fuel-efficient driving

- Make sure that the vehicle's tires are properly inflated.
- Mileage drops off drastically above 50 mph.
- Don't carry extra cargo. For each 100 pounds your vehicle carries, it costs about one-half mile per gallon.
- Have your wheels aligned. Less rolling resistance means the engine does not have to work as hard.
- Avoid unnecessary braking and accelerating.
- Keep the engine tuned. A misfiring spark plug can cut fuel efficiency by up to 30 percent.

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New legislation benefits seniors

\$20 million for prescription drugs -- Senior citizens on lower incomes should not have to choose between buying food or the prescription drugs they need to remain healthy. Thanks to the legislation allocating money from the national tobacco settlement, they won't have to make that decision.

The final bill includes \$20 million to help senior citizens on lower incomes purchase prescription drugs. From my visits around the district, this is one of the most pressing concerns among older Hoosiers.

Since health care was one of the priorities for spending tobacco settlement funds, I believe it was important to help seniors get the drugs they need to avoid their illnesses.

Personal Needs Allowance -- The General Assembly increased the monthly personal needs allowance from \$35 to \$50. The personal needs allowance covers individuals who enter medical treatment facilities in which more than half their bills are paid by either Medicaid or their private insurance.

The allowance is designed to help patients pay for those amenities that give them a measure of personal dignity. While the allowance usually is used to help patients buy toiletries like shaving cream and toothpaste, it also can buy cards for birthdays and Christmas and other things that help them carry on contact with relatives and other people.

Nursing Homes -- New legislation addresses concerns regarding the staffing of nursing homes. Under the law, the patient or a person designated by the patient may request information that lists the names of all nursing personnel on each shift and the supervisor for that shift.

A notice to inform people about the new law will be posted in a conspicuous place in all Medicaid certified facilities. Having this information will hopefully result in more accountability by the nursing homes and enable the patients and their families to make more informed decisions.



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